



THE WALKING DEAD

26

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IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

THE WALKING DEAD™

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CLIFF RATHBURN

Gray Tones, Cover Colors, Back Cover

RUS WOOTON

Letterer

Previously:

After cleaning out A-Block and finding protective riot gear suits, Rick and Glenn donned said suits and traveled to the prison parking lot in search of gasoline for the generator. While in the parking lot, they spotted a helicopter flying overhead.

For Image Comics



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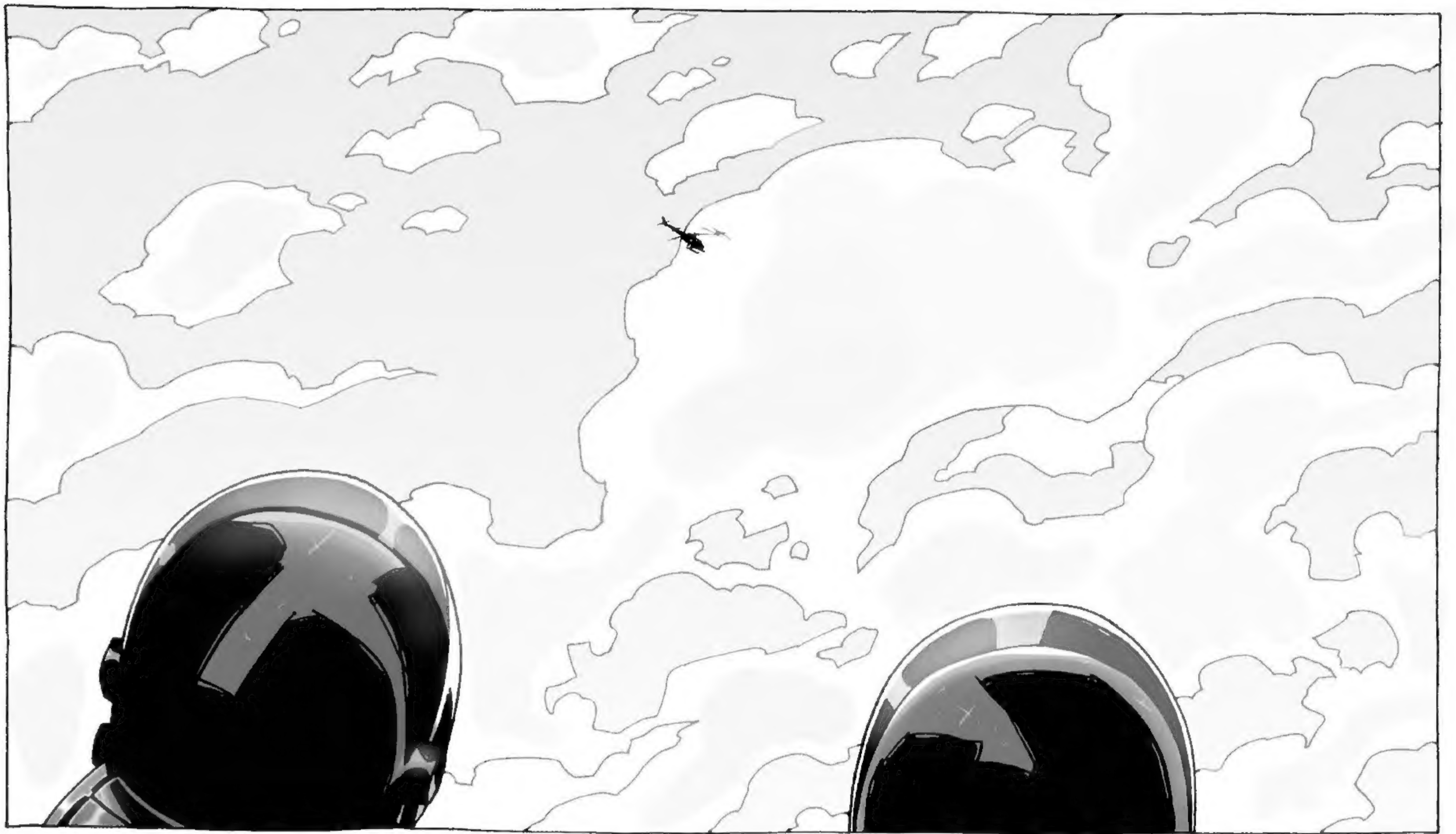
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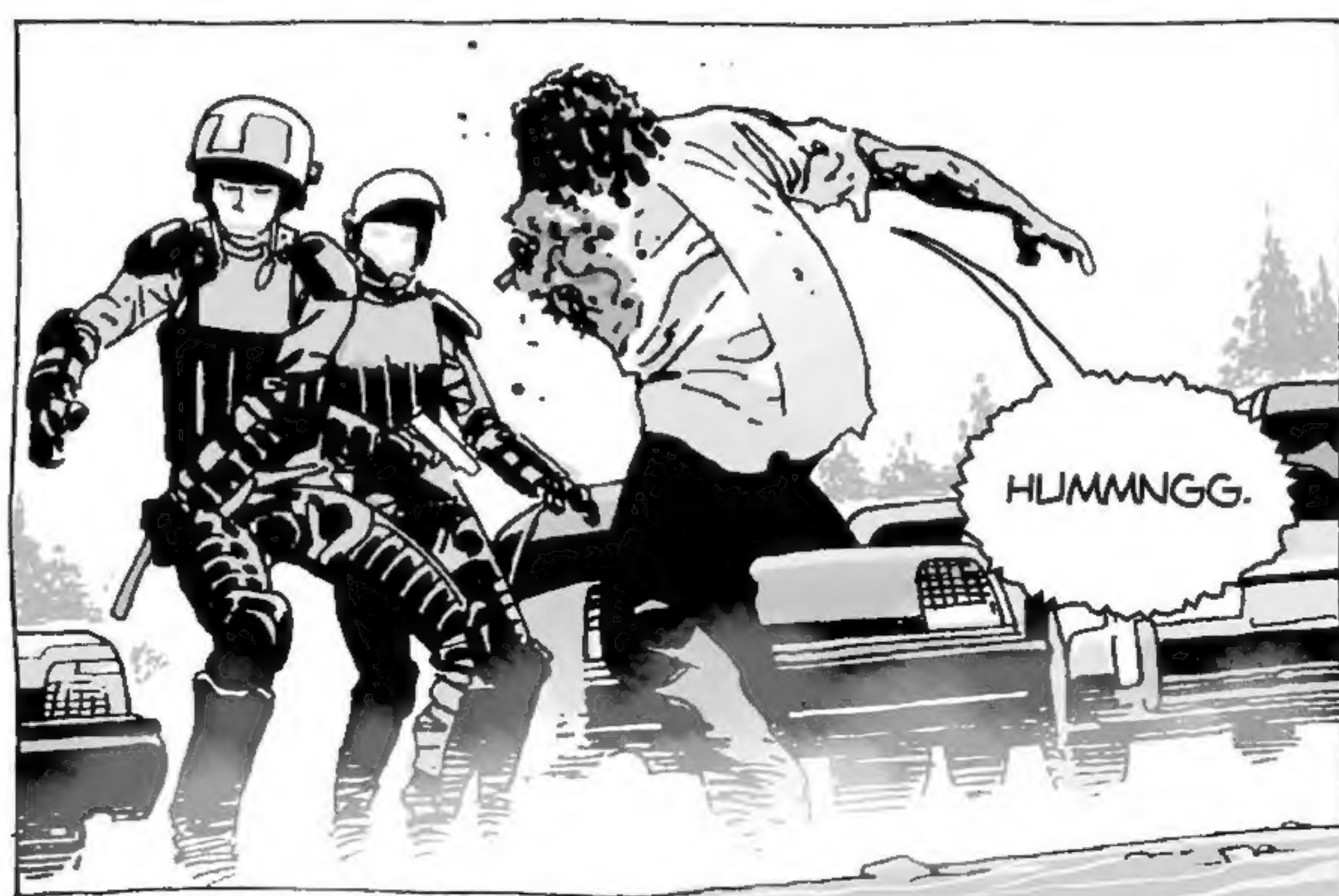
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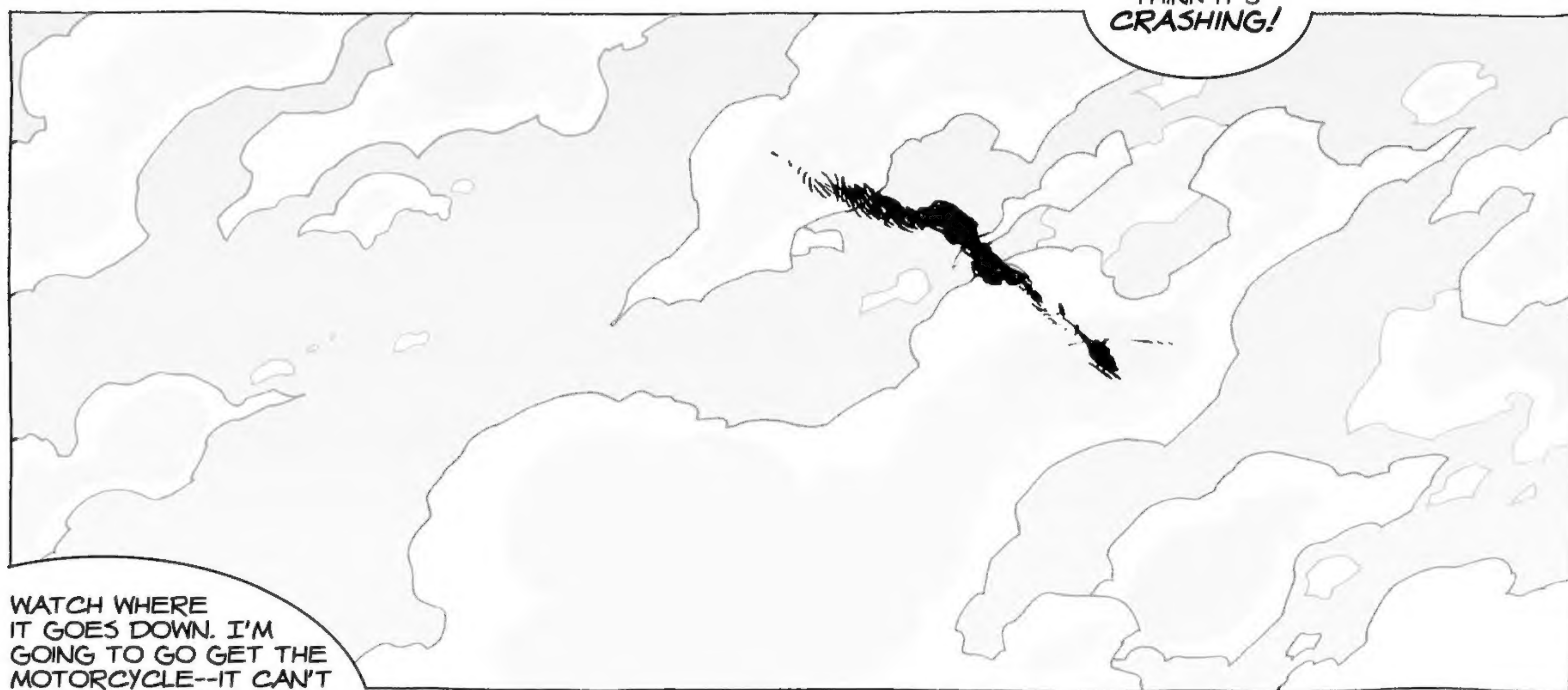
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WATCH WHERE IT GOES DOWN. I'M GOING TO GO GET THE MOTORCYCLE--IT CAN'T BE MORE THAN A MILE OR TWO AWAY--WE CAN RIDE THAT OVER TO WHERE IT CRASHES. WE NEED TO FIND OUT WHO THESE PEOPLE ARE.





WHAT ARE YOU
DOING? WHAT
HAPPENED?
IS GLENN
OKAY?!

YOU
DIDN'T SEE
IT?!

SEE
WHAT?

THE *HELICOPTER*. IT WAS
FLYING BY IN THE DISTANCE--
THEN IT CRASHED. GLENN AND
I ARE GOING TO GO CHECK
IT OUT... WE SHOULD BE ABLE
TO GET THERE AND BACK
BEFORE DARK. I JUST
WANTED TO LET YOU
KNOW SO YOU CAN
TELL LORI.

A *HELICOPTER*?
NO SHIT? WAS IT
MILITARY?

DON'T THINK
SO. I CAN'T
BELIEVE YOU
DIDN'T *SEE* IT.



I SAW
IT.

LET'S
GO.

HOW'D
YOU--?

DID YOU THINK I WOULDN'T FIND IT IF YOU HID IT IN DALE'S RV? PLEASE.

I'VE HAD THIS SWORD FOR A WEEK. YOU CAN TRUST ME.

I'M PRETTY SURE THAT PROVES OTHERWISE.

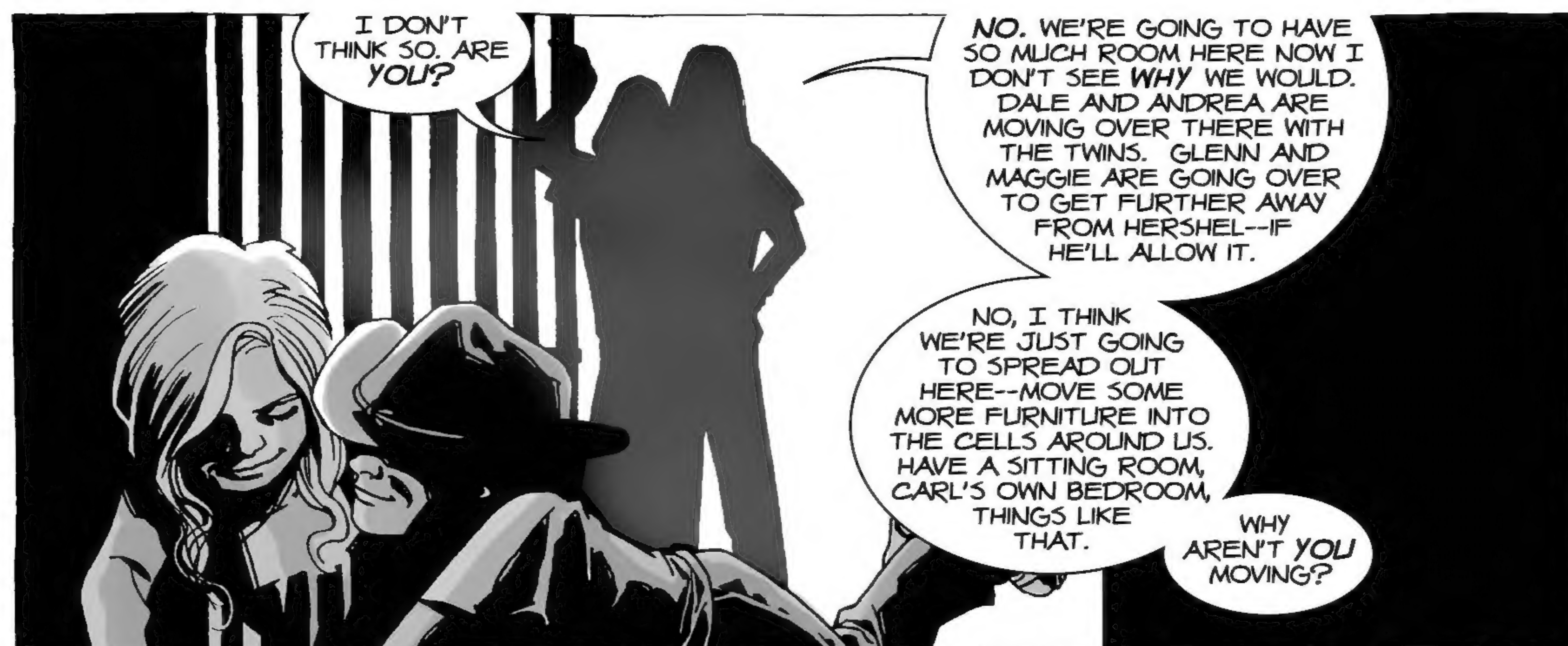
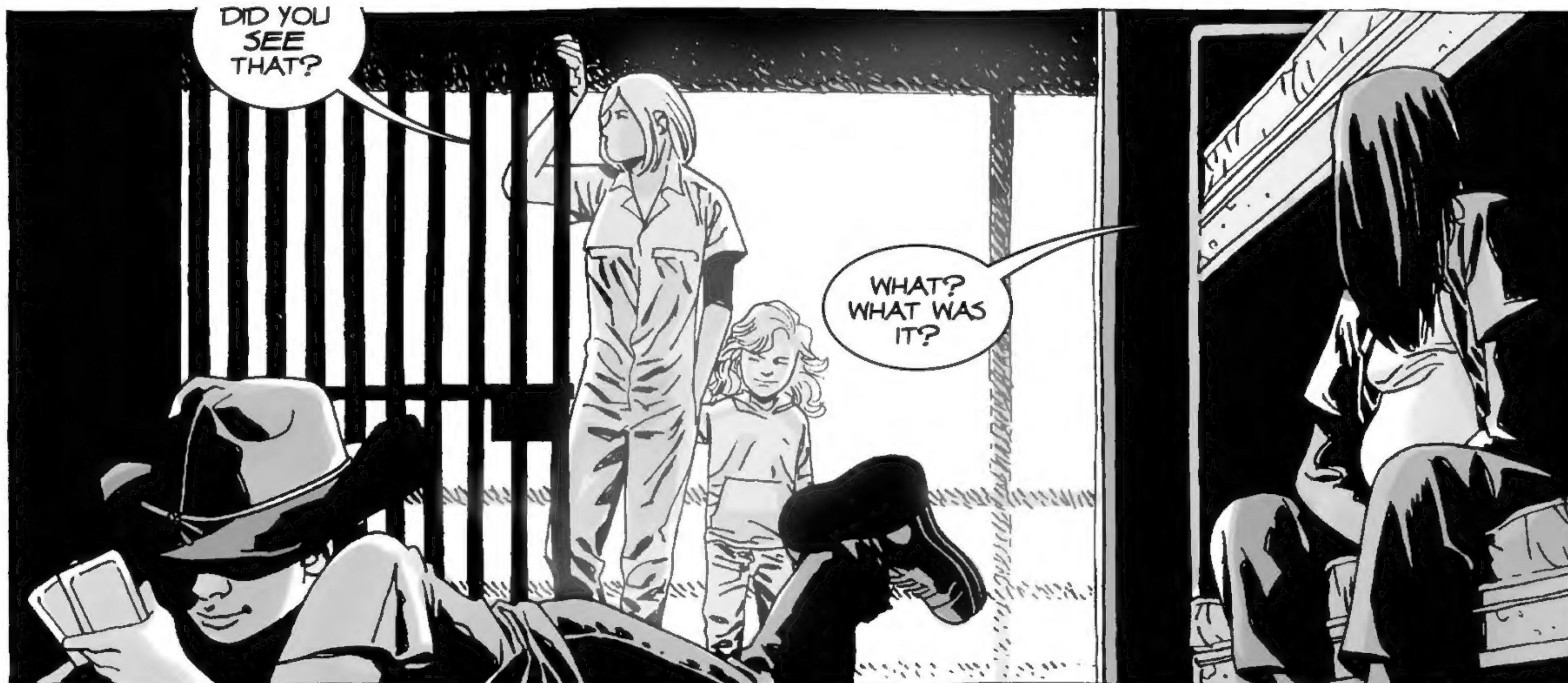
LET'S DEAL WITH THAT LATER. WE NEED TO GO. I SURVIVED OUT THERE ON MY OWN. I'M YOUR BEST BET AT GETTING THERE AND BACK IN ONE PIECE. YOU NEED ME WITH YOU--AND I COULD USE THE EXERCISE.

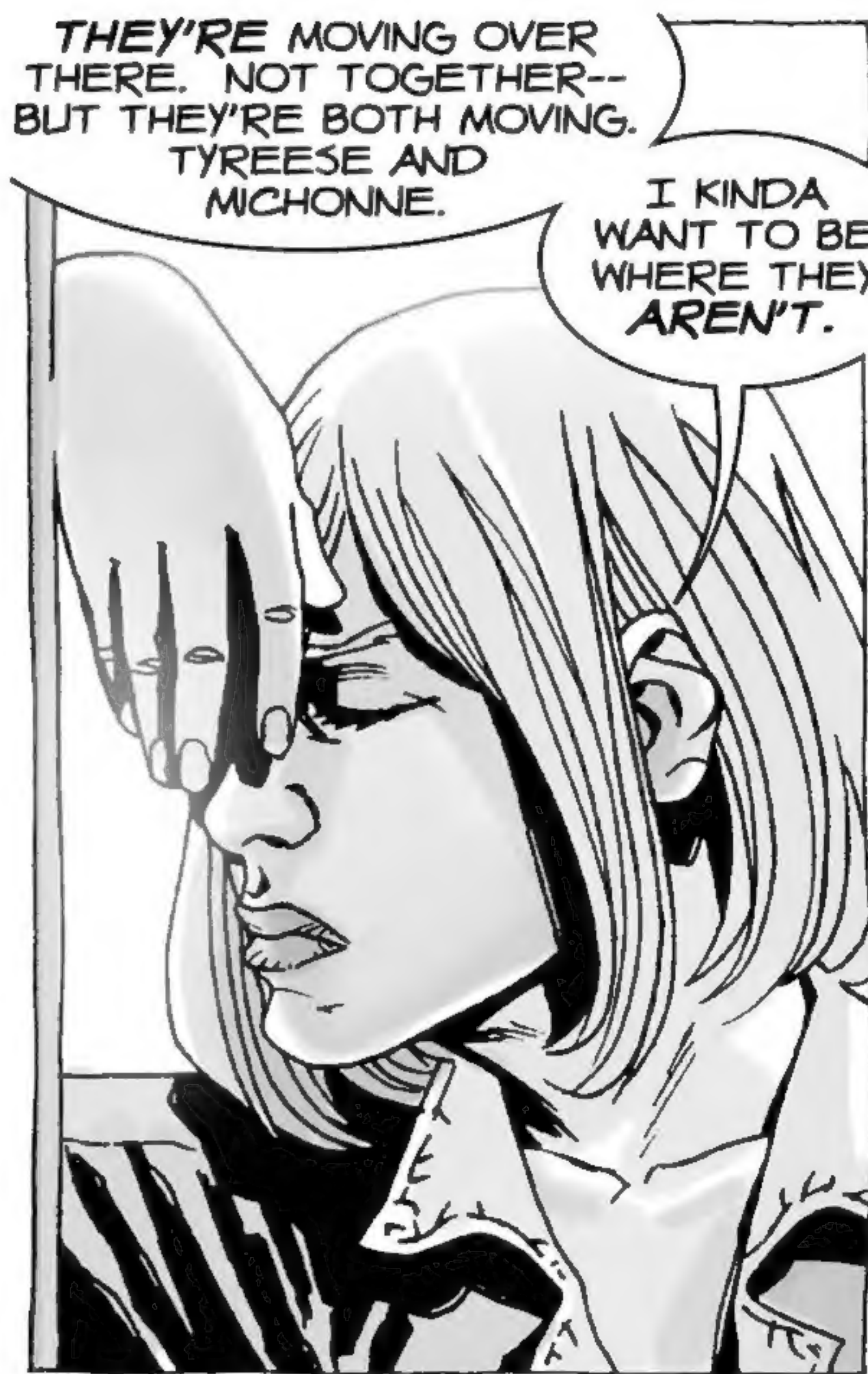
WE'RE NOT GOING TO RUN THERE.

YOU GUYS READY?

YOU WANT ME TO COME?

NO--JUST TELL LORI AND THE REST WHAT'S GOING ON AND KEEP THEM SAFE. WE'LL BE BACK TONIGHT--AND WE MAY HAVE GUESTS.





THEY'RE MOVING OVER THERE. NOT TOGETHER-- BUT THEY'RE BOTH MOVING. TYREESE AND MICHONNE.

I KINDA WANT TO BE WHERE THEY AREN'T.



YOU'D BE CLOSER TO THE LIBRARY.



NOT WORTH IT.

TRUST ME.

I DON'T THINK IT'S REALLY GOING TO MATTER *WHERE* ANY OF US LIVE NOW. WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A LOT OF SPACE ANYWHERE. WE COULD HAVE SPREAD OUT MORE IN *THIS* CELL BLOCK BUT I THINK AFTER SO LONG BEING CRAMMED IN THAT CAMPER ONE CELL PER FAMILY SEEMED LIKE ENOUGH.

THINGS ARE DIFFERENT, NOW. I THINK WE'RE ALL STARTING TO FEEL SAFER HERE. I THINK CARL MIGHT EVEN SLEEP IN HIS ROOM AFTER WE GET IT SET UP. AND WITH ALL THE FURNITURE FROM THE OFFICES IN A-BLOCK, WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE THIS PLACE LOOK NICE.

...AND IF WE CAN GET THE GENERATOR RUNNING-- WELL...



OH, I KNOW. I COULD READ *INSIDE*--AT NIGHT. I COULD READ IN BED BEFORE I GO TO SLEEP INSTEAD OF OUTSIDE HOLDING DOWN THE PAGES FROM THE WIND.

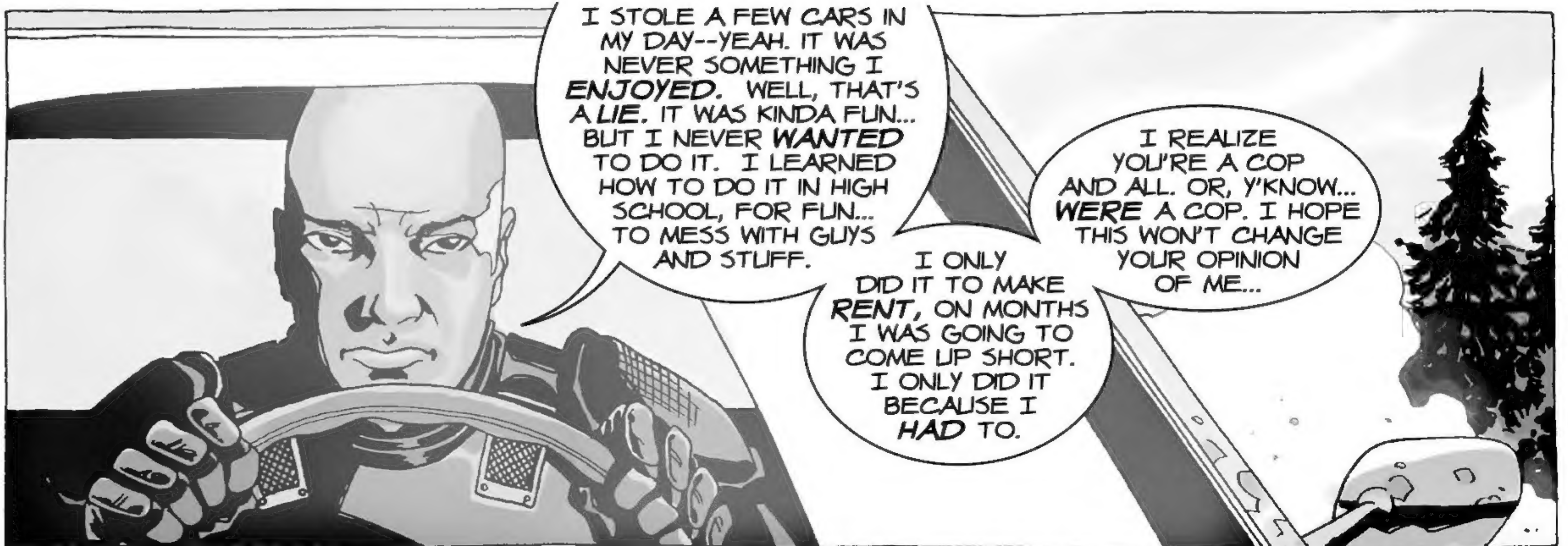
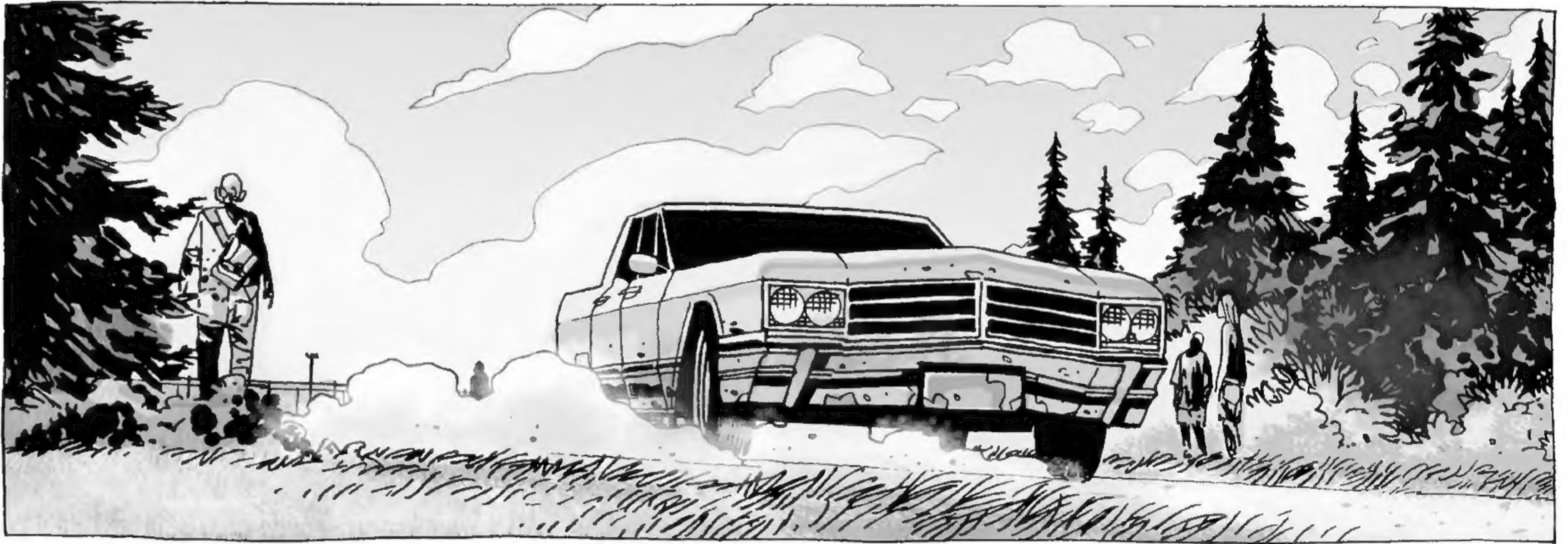


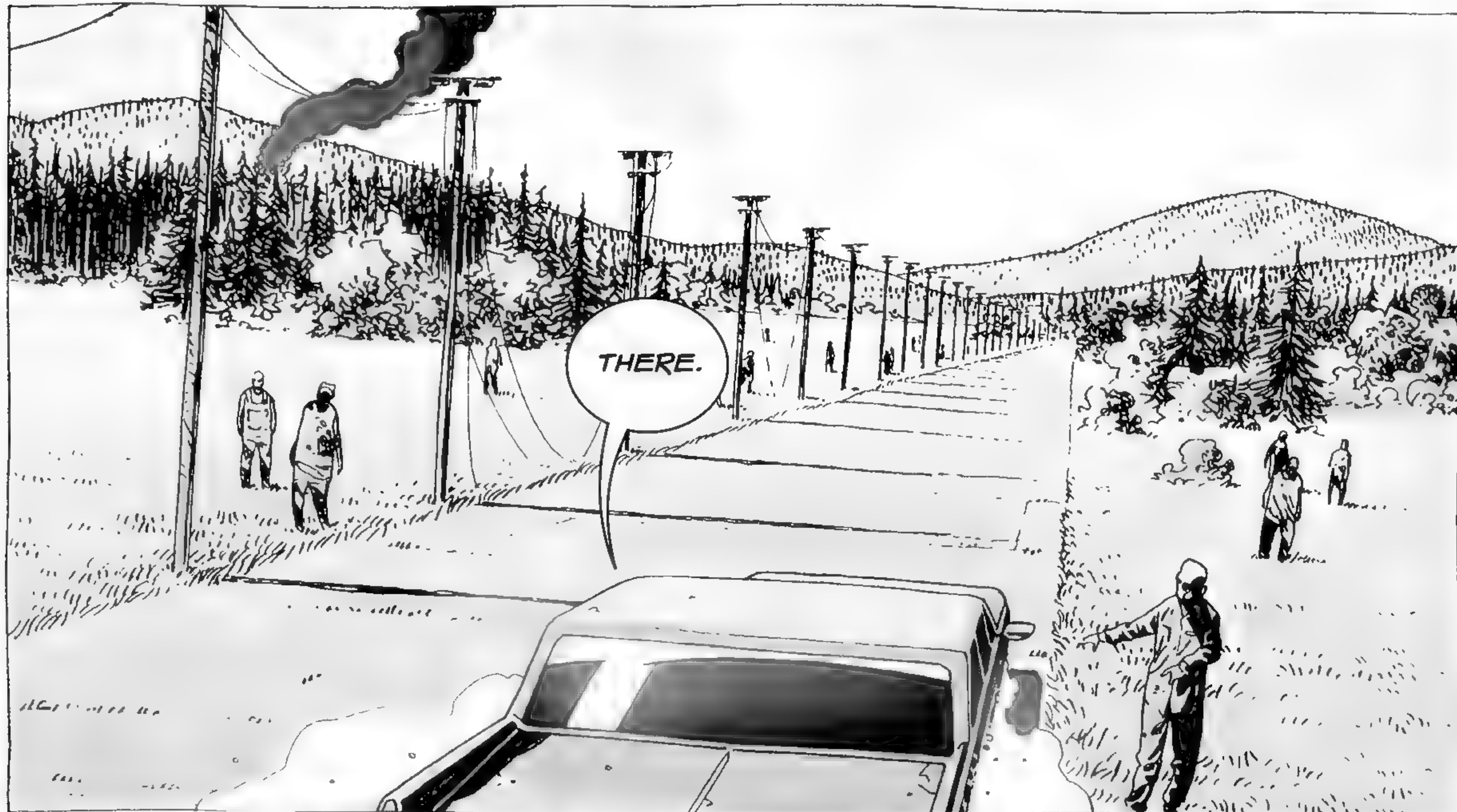
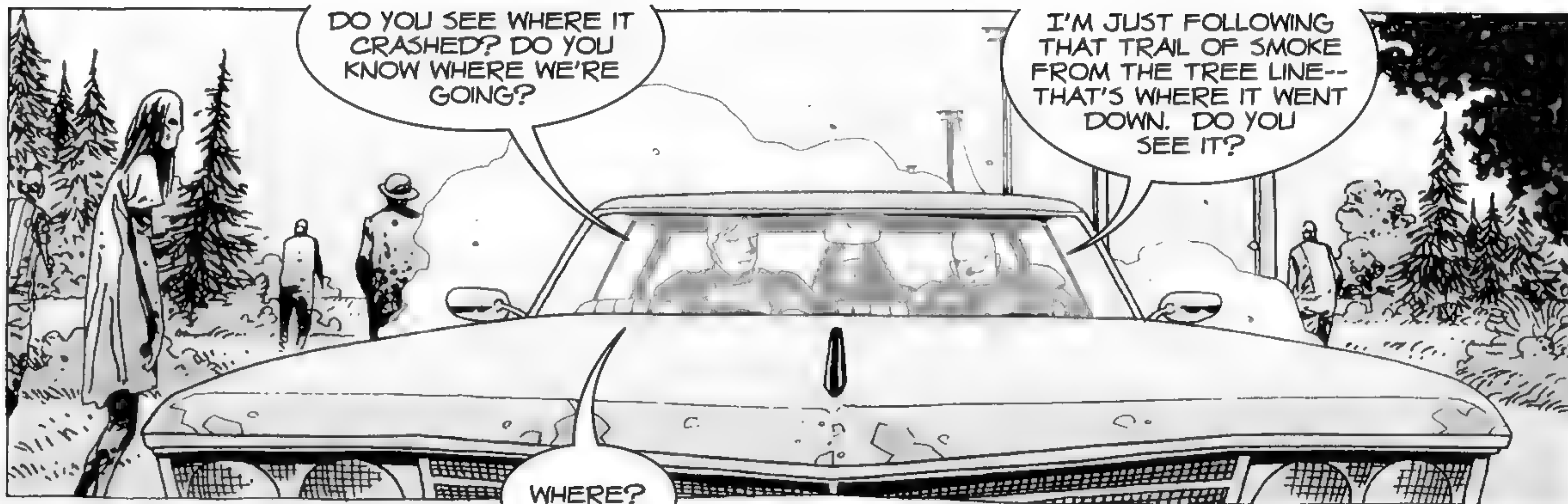
NOT ONLY THAT BUT THEY'VE GOT DVDS IN THE LIBRARY, TOO. I DON'T WANT TO GET YOU TOO EXCITED BUT WE COULD ACTUALLY WATCH A MOVIE OR TWO.



REALLY?!







YEAH--IT'S STARTING TO GET CROWDED AT THE OUTER FENCE NOW THAT THE WEATHER IS WARM. I WAS THINKING--SINCE WE'VE GOT THESE SUITS NOW, A COUPLE OF US COULD JUST GO OUTSIDE AND CLEAN HOUSE ONCE A DAY STARTING TOMORROW.

IT WOULDN'T TAKE TOO LONG TO GET RID OF ALL THE ONES OUT THERE NOW--AND AFTER THEY'RE ALL GONE, WE COULD JUST KILL THE NEW ARRIVALS AS THEY BUILD UP.

YEAH--THAT MAKES SENSE. BEFORE IT WASN'T A PRIORITY AND IT SEEMED LIKE A WASTE OF AMMO. AMMO WE DIDN'T HAVE.

STABBING THEM THROUGH THE FENCE WAS THINNING THEM OUT A LITTLE BUT NOBODY WAS REALLY DOING IT ON A REGULAR BASIS. IT'D BE SAFE TO DO IT WITH THE SUITS.

MAYBE MAGGIE AND I WILL START DOING IT WHEN WE GET BACK--OR IF SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DO IT, OTIS--OR MAYBE BILLY.

SHE WAS DYING FOR AN EXCUSE TO PUT ONE OF THOSE SUITS ON EARLIER TODAY.

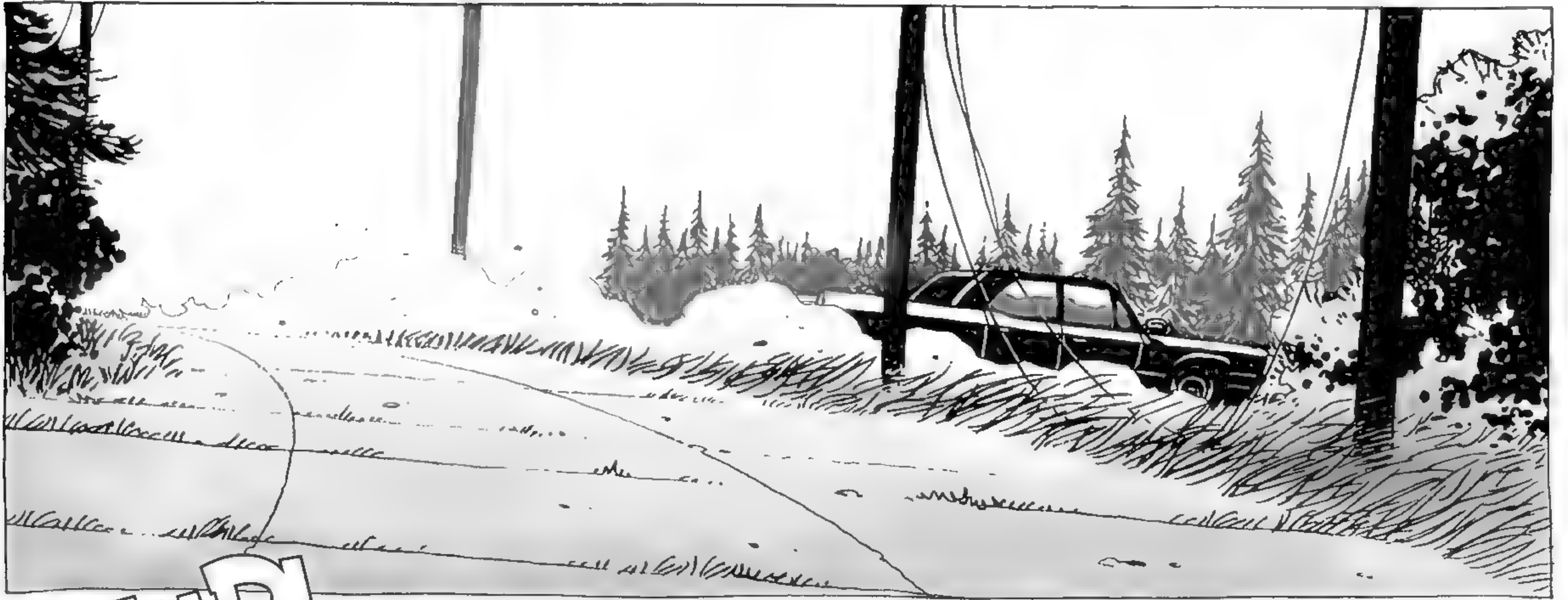


SHIT, GLENN. LOOK.



THE ROAD IS NOT GOING WHERE WE NEED IT TO GO.

DAMMIT, I KNEW I SHOULD HAVE GRABBED THE SUV.



THUMP!



IS THIS **BETTER?** WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET THERE MUCH FASTER THAN IF WE **RAN** BUT AT LEAST OUR BRAINS WON'T BE SCRAMBLED.

JUST GET US THERE.

OKAY--NOW I'VE JUST GOT TO GET OVER THIS--

OH, SHIT.

MAYBE SLOWING DOWN SO MUCH WASN'T A GOOD IDEA. I THINK WE'RE **STUCK**.

OKAY--**FUCK**.

NOW WE'RE WALKING.

IF ANYONE SURVIVED THAT CRASH I HOPE THEY CAN **WALK**--BECAUSE I REALLY DON'T FEEL LIKE CARRYING THEM TO THE PRISON.



SINCE YOUR DADDY IS... GONE...
ANDREA AND I ARE GOING TO
TAKE CARE OF YOU NOW. WE'RE
GOING TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE
FED AND SAFE AND THAT
YOU'VE GOT STUFF
TO DO.

WE'RE EVEN
GOING TO **TEACH**
YOU A FEW THINGS...
OR TRY TO AT
LEAST.

THAT'S RIGHT, BOYS--AND
WE'RE GOING TO BE MOVING
YOU OVER TO THE OTHER
SIDE OF THE PRISON
TOMORROW SO THAT YOU
GUYS CAN HAVE A ROOM
ALL TO YOURSELF NEXT
TO OUR NEW
ROOM.

WHAT
DO YOU
THINK OF
THAT?



OF COURSE, IF YOU
WANT TO--YOU CAN
STAY IN THE ROOM
WITH DALE AND I.
WE DON'T WANT TO
UPSET YOU--IT'S
WHATEVER YOU
WANT.

ARE YOU
OUR NEW
MOMMY AND
DADDY?

NOT REALLY--
BUT, IF YOU'D
LIKE--YOU CAN
CALL US THAT
IF YOU WANT
TO.



WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO? ONCE WE GO INTO THE WOODS WE WON'T BE ABLE TO SEE THE SMOKE. HOW ARE WE GOING TO FIND THIS THING?

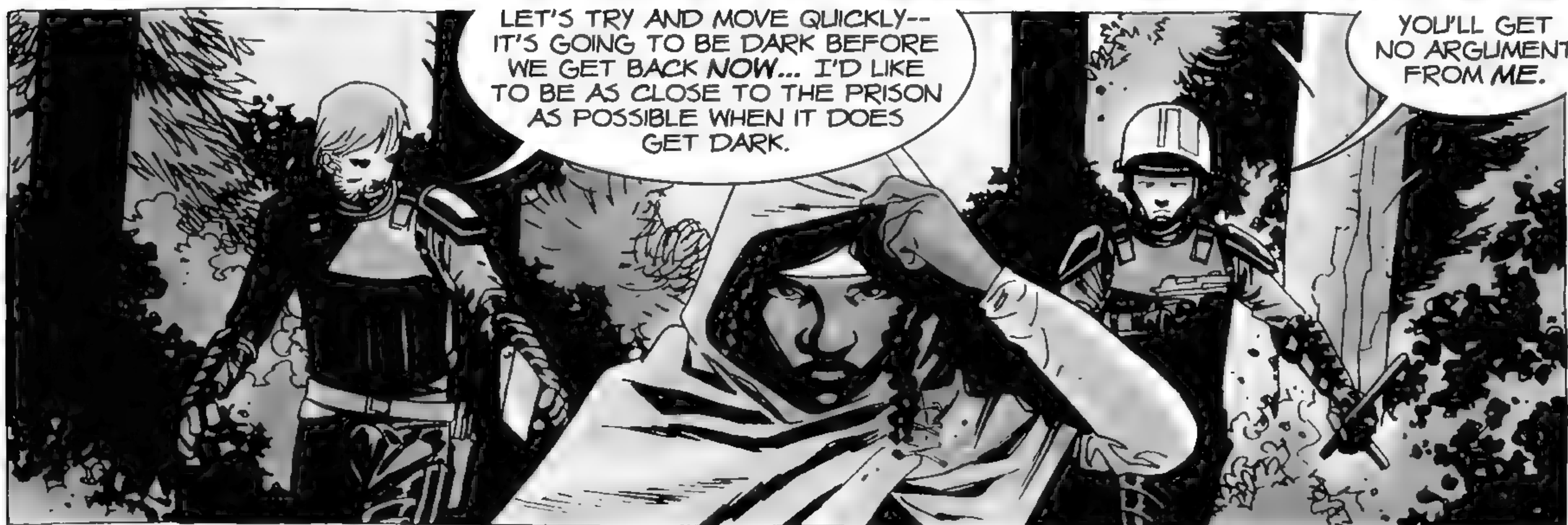
WE'RE ALMOST THERE--IT SHOULDN'T BE TOO HARD. YOU SHOULD BE MORE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT'S IN THESE WOODS. ANYTHING COULD BE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF ANY ONE OF THESE TREES.

STAY ALERT-- YOU SHOULD SMELL THEM BEFORE THEY'RE CLOSE ENOUGH TO BITE.



LET'S TRY AND MOVE QUICKLY-- IT'S GOING TO BE DARK BEFORE WE GET BACK NOW... I'D LIKE TO BE AS CLOSE TO THE PRISON AS POSSIBLE WHEN IT DOES GET DARK.

YOU'LL GET NO ARGUMENT FROM ME.



SHHH.



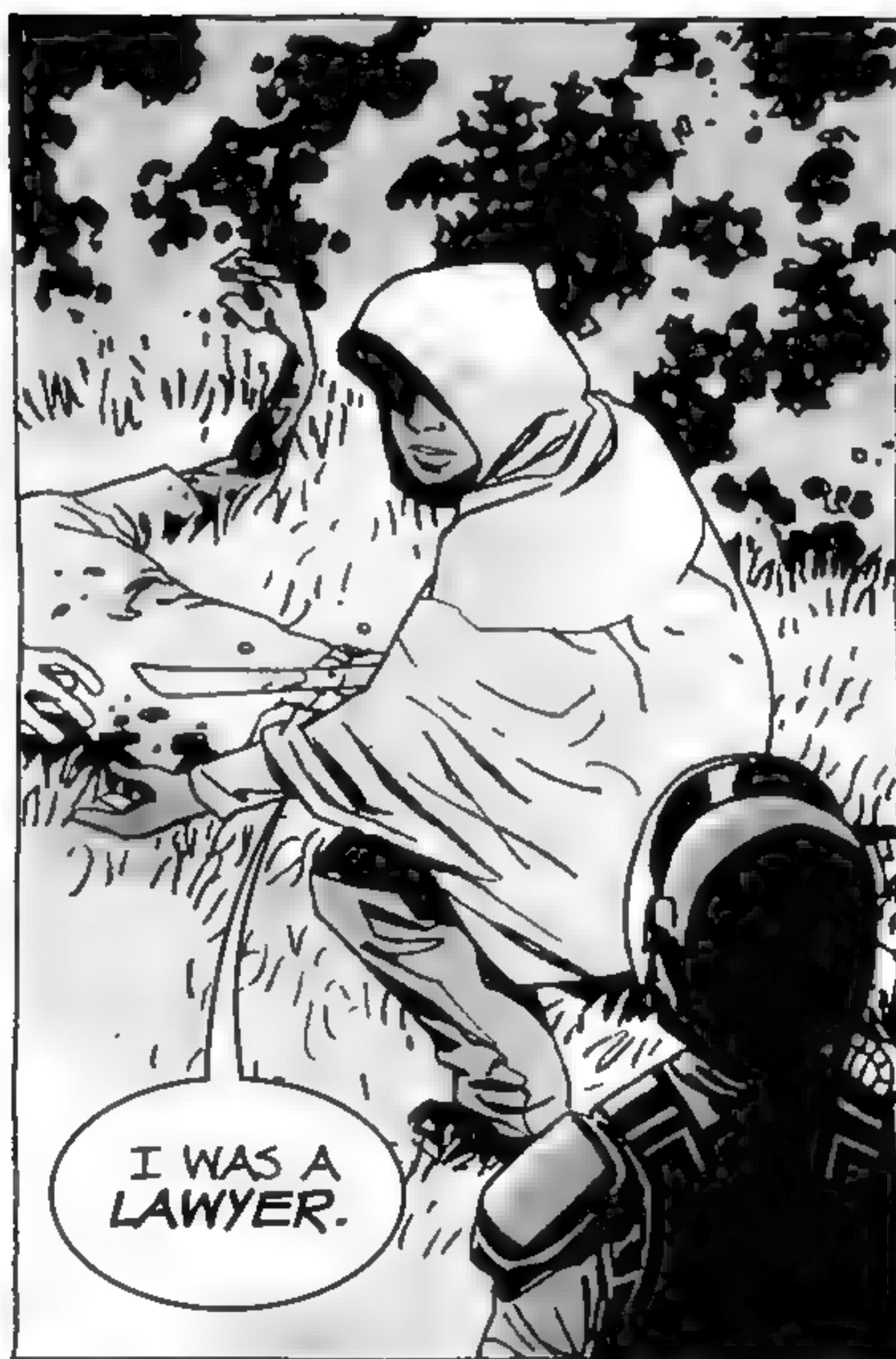
THUNK!





SO WHAT EXACTLY DID YOU DO BEFORE? I NEVER REALLY THOUGHT THERE WAS A LOT OF MONEY IN BEING A NINJA.

THEY STILL HIRING FOR SAMURAI?

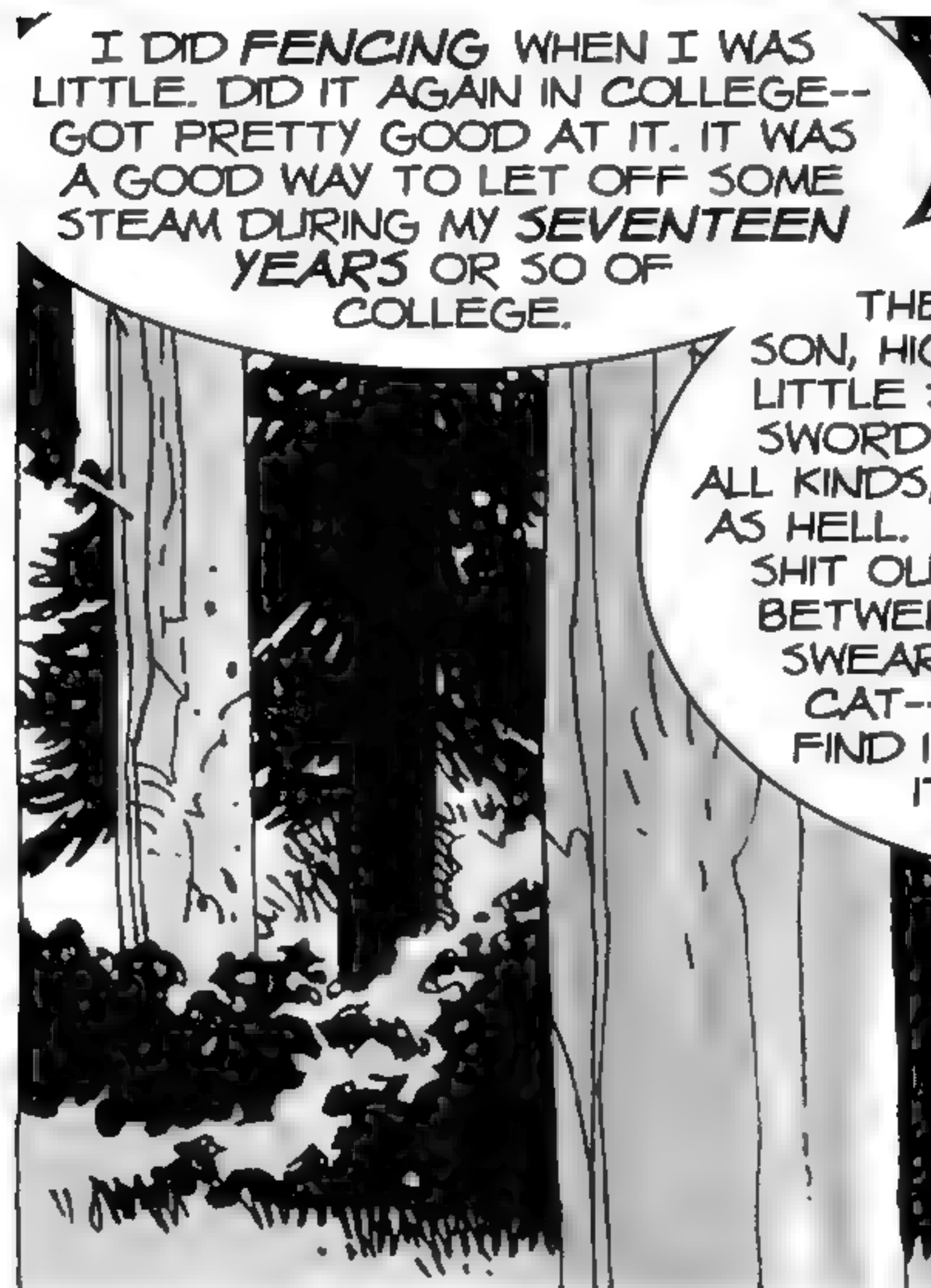


I WAS A LAWYER.



I DON'T FIND THAT THE LEAST BIT SURPRISING.

LOT OF SWORDPLAY AROUND THE OFFICE? THAT MAKES SENSE.

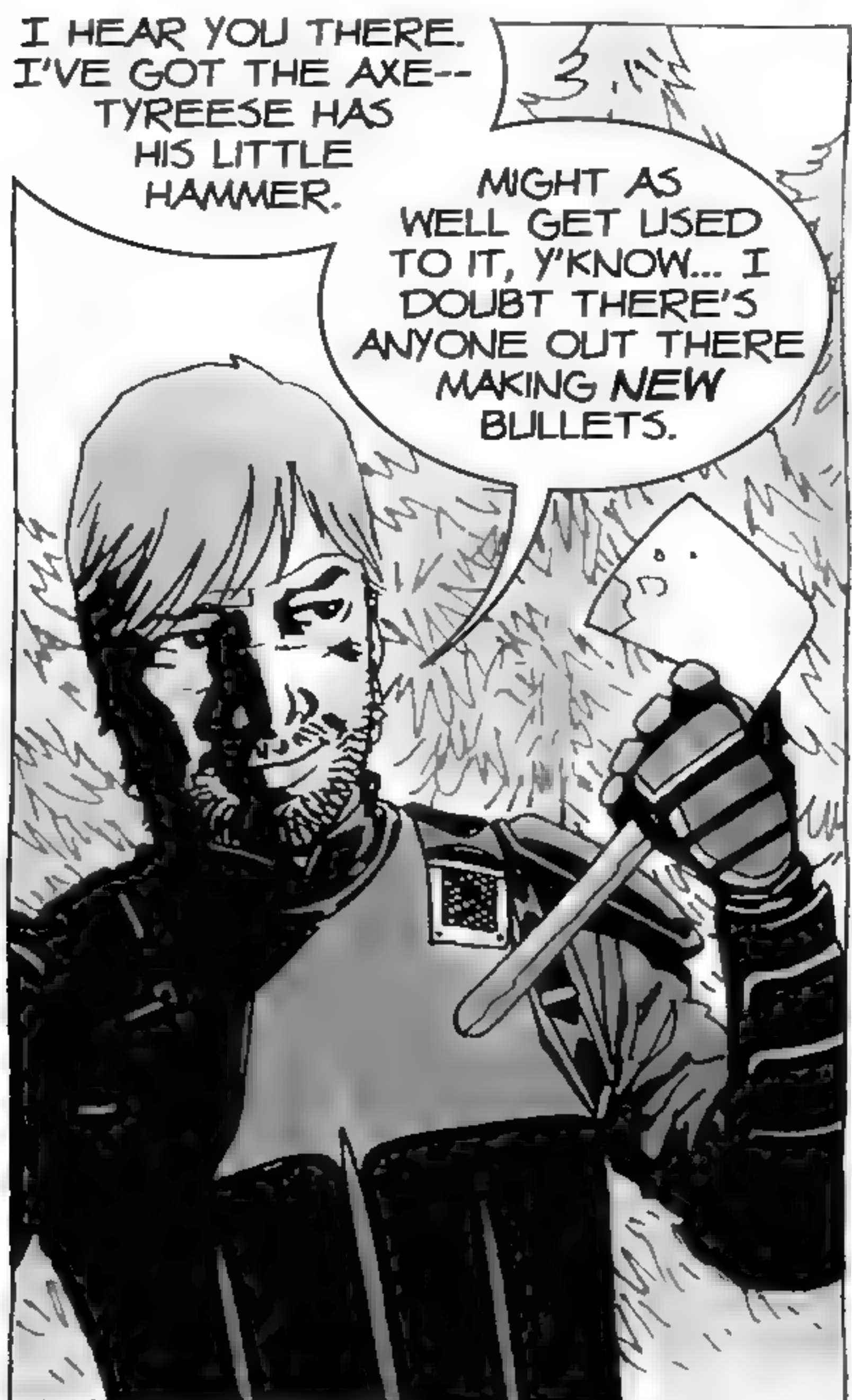


I DID FENCING WHEN I WAS LITTLE. DID IT AGAIN IN COLLEGE-- GOT PRETTY GOOD AT IT. IT WAS A GOOD WAY TO LET OFF SOME STEAM DURING MY SEVENTEEN YEARS OR SO OF COLLEGE.



WHEN THE SHIT WENT DOWN-- THE FIRST PLACE I WENT WAS HIS HOUSE. GRABBED THIS THING. IT WAS EASIER THAN FINDING A GUN...AND IT DOESN'T DRAW ANY ATTENTION TO YOU.

THE NEIGHBOR'S SON, HIGH SCHOOL-AGED LITTLE SHIT HEAD, WAS A SWORD JUNKIE. HE HAD ALL KINDS, KEPT THEM SHARP AS HELL. USED TO CUT THE SHIT OUT OF THE FENCE BETWEEN OUR YARDS. I SWEAR HE KILLED OUR CAT--WE NEVER DID FIND IT... BUT I KNOW IT WAS HIM.



I HEAR YOU THERE. I'VE GOT THE AXE-- TYREESE HAS HIS LITTLE HAMMER.

MIGHT AS WELL GET USED TO IT, Y'KNOW... I DOUBT THERE'S ANYONE OUT THERE MAKING NEW BULLETS.



YOU SHOULD TALK TO HIM SOMETIME.

TYREESE, I MEAN.



WHAT WAS THAT?

ARE YOU SERIOUS?



RLAGGH!

SLASH!!



FWUMP!



I THINK YOU SHOULD TALK TO TYREESE.

THUNK!



UH... RIGHT.

WHAT MAKES YOU SAY THAT?

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE BOTH DOING. YOU'RE STILL PISSED OFF AT EACH OTHER--YOU'RE NOT FRIENDS ANYMORE, BUT YOU'RE TALKING, BOTH OF YOU ACTING LIKE THINGS ARE BACK TO THE WAY THEY WERE.

AND THEY'RE NOT.

THING IS, TYREESE WAS CLOSE TO TWO PEOPLE HERE A WEEK AGO--CAROL AND YOU. NOW HE TALKS TO ME, BUT I'LL BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU WE DON'T REALLY KNOW THAT MUCH ABOUT EACH OTHER.

HE'D APOLOGIZE IF HE WEREN'T SO GODDAMN STUBBORN. I CAN'T HELP BUT THINK THE SAME THING COULD BE SAID ABOUT YOU. YOU GUYS ARE TOO GODDAMN ALIKE TO BE MAD AT EACH OTHER FOREVER.





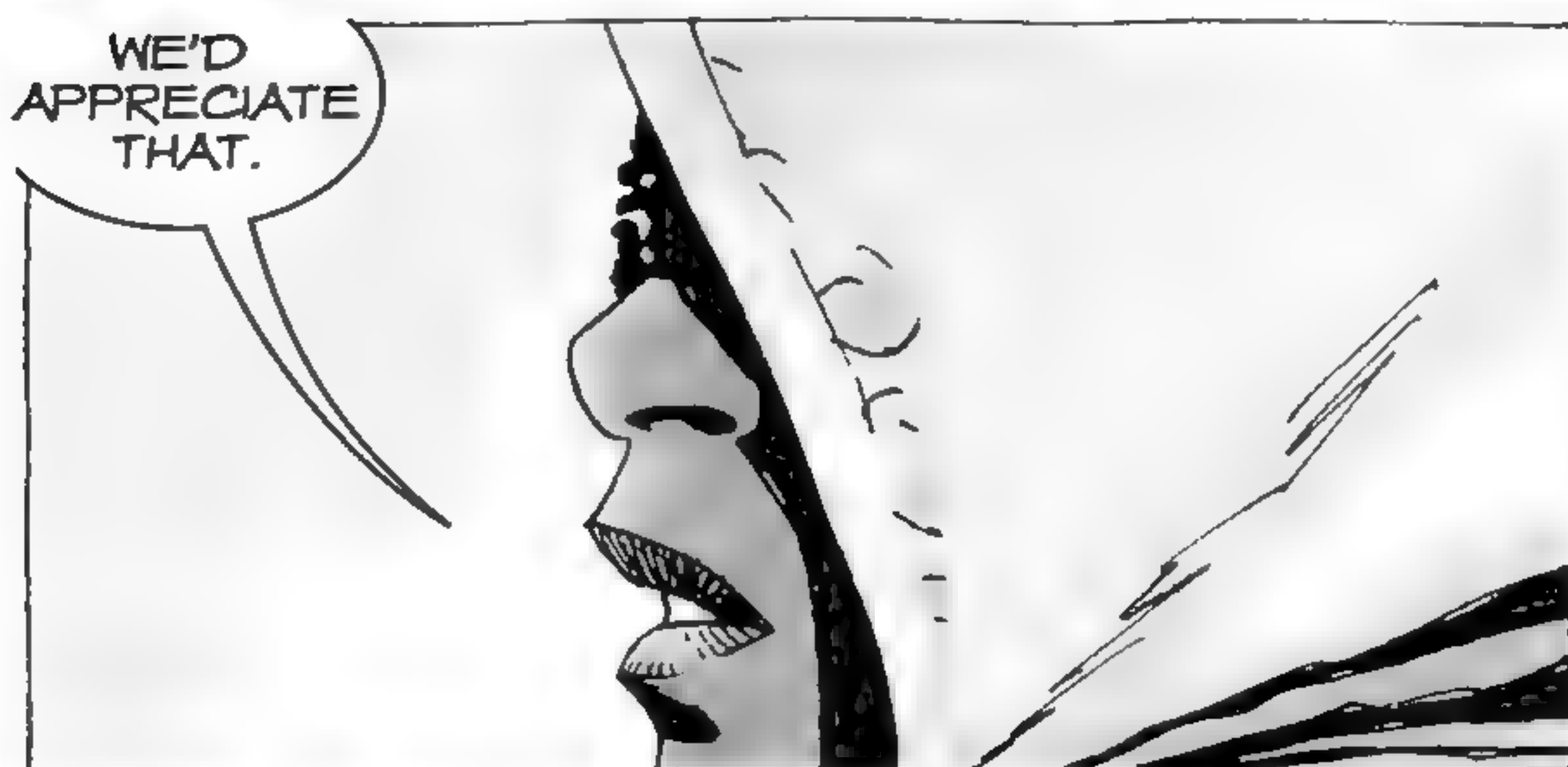
MAYBE.



ALTHOUGH, I GOTTA SAY--
I DON'T KNOW WHAT
THERE IS THAT I NEED TO
APOLOGIZE FOR. WITH HIM
BEING THE ONE WHO
STARTED THE FIGHT
AND ALL.

I DON'T
HATE THE GUY,
THOUGH... LORD
KNOWS WE GOT
ALONG FINE FOR
A WHILE THERE. WHAT
HAPPENED BETWEEN
YOU, HE AND CAROL
IS PROBABLY NONE
OF MY BUSINESS
ANYWAY.

MAYBE I'LL
TALK TO HIM
TOMORROW.



WE'D
APPRECIATE
THAT.



GUYS--
LOOK.



I CAN SEE
THE SMOKE
AGAIN.

I THINK
WE'RE
GETTING
CLOSE!



DAMMIT!

HE'S
DOING THIS
TO ME
AGAIN!



LORI, CALM DOWN--
THIS *CAN'T* BE
GOOD FOR THE
BABY. RICK'S FINE--
I'M SURE HE'LL
BE BACK
SOON.



WILL HE? HE HASN'T
CALLED--I CAN'T
SEE HIM--I HAVE NO
WAY OF KNOWING
WHEN HE'LL COME
BACK--OR IF HE'LL
COME BACK--*AGAIN!*
HE'S DONE THIS TO
ME *TOO DAMN*
MUCH.

HE
COULD HAVE
SENT ANY NUMBER
OF PEOPLE TO
CHECK ON SOME
STUPID WRECKED
HELICOPTER! HE
DIDN'T HAVE TO
GO HIMSEL--!!



ARE YOU OKAY--
WAS IT THE *BABY*?
WHAT HURTS?!

IT'S--
NOTHING--
IT'LL
PASS.

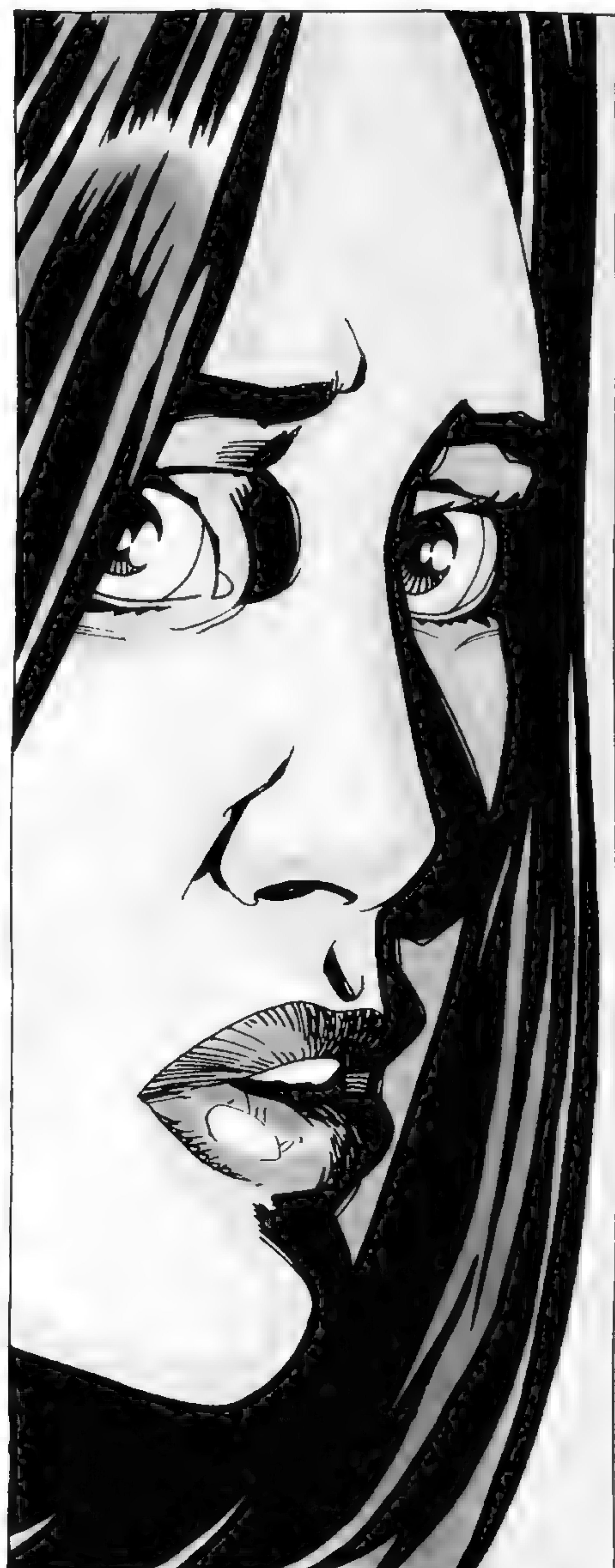
JUST--CAN YOU GO GET
CARL AND SOPHIA FROM
DALE AND ANDREA'S
CELL? THEY'VE BEEN
WITH THEM LONG ENOUGH.
I'M--I'M GOING TO
NEED TO GET CARL
READY FOR BED
SOON.



YEAH, I'LL
GET THEM--IN
A MINUTE.

THERE'S,
UH... SOMETHING
I WANTED TO
ASK YOU BEFORE
THEY CAME
BACK.











WHOEVER
WAS IN THE
HELICOPTER--
SOMEONE TOOK
THEM.

SOMEONE
WHO WAS
CLOSER THAN
WE WERE...

LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Welcome to Walking Dead 26. Big stuff is on the horizon, folks. The next few issues will set the stage for the next couple years of this book. Big, BIG stuff... so pay attention.

Charlie and Cliff are doing a bang-up job on interiors and now covers as well. Looking sharp, fellas. Just wanted to get them a shout out. Young mister Rathburn is also doing a great job on back covers, which he'll be handling for the next bit of issues at least.

Now, lets answer some mail.

Hey Kirkman,

Merl Key and I both shop at Comic Cave in Columbus. He's gotten like four letters printed in Walking Dead so far; I only have one. Therefore, in a pathetic attempt to try to make up some ground on his record, I am going to send you two letters this time around. I apologize for any inconvenience this may cause, but you gotta give me credit for the originality. It's better than the typical "OMG when is Rick gonna die, [insert lame joke about Cho's Zombie King here]" kind of letter. If you don't have room to print both, feel free to substitute one of mine for Merl's. BRB.

--Sam Kirkland

I can't believe I'm printing this.

Hi again Kirkman,

I'm still loving the book! #23 was amazing as usual. Very brutal. You'll also be pleased to know that I ordered the HC even though I have most of the issues and TPBs already. I can't wait for the Omnibus.

I gotta give a shout-out to Mike at Comic Cave for forcing me to buy the first WD TPB. Usually I can resist his pleas for me to buy something, but on that life-changing day I couldn't. Thanks Mike!

Really loving Invincible; that MTU issue was superb. And to all you readers out there: be sure to check out my reviews at HeroRealm.com (shameless plug!). Our Best of 2005 column in 'Lowdown &

Dirty' should be up over the holidays, and I have a sneaking suspicion that a Kirkman book will be there.

And I almost forgot: someone the other day actually mistook my name for "Kirkman" and I had to tell them, "no, it's not like the superhero. It's KirkLAND, like the country."

That was a joke, BTW. Kirkland is still a much better name.

Don't ever stop writing this book!

--Sam Kirkland

I beg to differ. Kirkland always sounded funny to me growing up. When people would mistake my last name for "Kirkland" I would think: "is that a real name?" So in closing... you are the one with the lame name. Mine is totally sweet.

Dear Kirkman,

Now normally I complain about issue long fights (Bendis, Liefeld, etc), but issue 23 rocked. Very much like a real fight, ending with both combatants on the ground, exhausted and hurt. When I got the issue, I turned right to the letter's column and saw the last page of the book. It looks like (if you didn't see the preceding page) Rick shot himself in the head. Oh, and thanks for killing Allen.

1. Are you the one that comes up with the words representing sounds? WHUD! WRAMM! And my favorite, THOOM! Those are great.

I come up with them, but most of them are old comic book stand-bys... it's not like I invented them. Although, I think I'm the only person to ever use "Brakka-rakka-thakka-dakka-doom!" Which was over in Invincible or Brit. I like sound effects.

2. Do you think that Dr Logan and Bub are still out there together somewhere?

Different universe... and I don't own those

guys. Dead Dog Comics is doing a Day of the Dead book with BUB in it. So if you're curious as to what's going on with that guy--give it a look.

3. When will we see a city again? That's the best stuff. Abandoned military equipment, papers blowing through the streets declaring "The Dead Walk!", and all that delicious carnage you want to see in a zombie film.

I too am anxious to get back to a city with the story... so we'll see one sooner or later.

4. OK, besides Romero's stuff, what are some of your favorite Zombie films? Ever see Plague of the Zombies? Did you hate Resident Evil 2 too?

I'm way to smitten with Mila Jovovich to ever hate anything she was in. Was Resident Evil 2 silly? Maybe a little bit... but I loved every minute of it. Never seen Plague of the Zombies. As far as other non-Romero zombie flicks... you've all got to go find a copy of "STACY" it's an Asian zombie movie that is about the most bizarre zombie flick I've ever seen. Not great, actually, not even good, but it's gory as all heck and it's just bizarre. I should probably publicly thank Mark Englert for turning me on to that... and for turning me on in general.

5. Where are all the themed zombies? Who know, the clowns, bikers, etc? Lately it's just slightly obscured or shade-like figures in the background. Another reason to get out of the prison. Or, let zombies in...

Personally I always hated the clown, Santa, cheerleader zombies in all the Romero flicks. I mean, they'd be there, sure... but what are the odds? If everyone in my neighborhood suddenly turned into zombies and starting walking out of their houses... they'd be in normal every day clothes, at least 95% of them would be. The other 5% would be naked. Like me.

So the Invincible and Spidey team-up in MTU was great! I'd write to that book, but you aren't printing letters in it... I can't freakin wait until Marvel Zombies. I think I said something about it in another letter, but I can't remember those things. Then they get printed late and I'm askin about Land of the Dead or something after you've talked about it over and over. I can't complain though, these issues are coming out quick again. Thanks for killing Allen. Didn't even give that guy a chance to get his zombie close-up. Good job!

THOOM!
Chris Pitts

Glad you're digging this stuff, Chris.

Yo, Kirkman,

Just got issue 23 today. It was great, but not the best thus far I have to say. Almost every issue

until now has been better than the one before it, but I have to say 22 topped the all out rick/tyreese brawl. The issue was still brilliant, just not more brilliant than the one before it.

I also noticed the two page spread formed by the last page of 22 and the first page of 23. It was a great touch by Kirkman (I assume it was his idea) and an even better job on the art by Charlie and Cliff. It's kinda nice to think it will be a straight up two page spread with no covers or letter pages or anything in between when the trade comes out, but I also like that you need to buy both singles to see the whole image.

It was my idea, but it's only fair to point out that I get it from Erik Larsen. He did it in-between Savage Dragon 30 and 31. I think he was the first to ever do that.

On another note, thank you for killing Allen (even after you said not to count him out just yet last issue-- you bastard!). I was hoping you would make that move, because if he lived, the characters would assume that cutting off his leg healed him, and go around cutting off limbs every time they got bit. This would give them an easy way out if they got bitten, and almost no one would die of zombie bites, which could get boring.

And Charlie, I especially liked the panel where Rick falls over the railing in the prison and Tyreese just misses grabbing him. This was the best panel in the issue in my opinion. It was really dramatic and very realistic. Let's not forget the rest of the team either- Cliff is doing an amazing job, as usual (where do you find these guys, Kirkman?), and good ol' Rus really makes the word bubbles pop off the page.

I find them the same place everyone else finds them. The bus station.

Now for questions. I know you love those.

1. Rick is gonna be okay, right? At least physically if not mentally? I mean, his hand is already beat to crap, give him a break.

I might.

2. Why the hell was Glenn just standing there the whole issue telling them to stop but not doing anything about it?

He's a little guy--he's not about to get in-between them. He doesn't want to get his ass handed to him in front of his girl. Who does?

3. I know, I know. The covers represent an idea, not what actually happens. still, it bugs me that you showed Tyreese beat up on the cover when Rick was the one who really got his ass whooped. Why no Rick on the cover?

Rick is on all the covers, just about. And he was pretty big on the cover to 24. So if he had been on the cover to 23 also, it would have looked weird. I'm keeping Rick off covers for a while.

4. Alright, it's long enough already. When is the freakin' baby gonna be born?

Lori is six or seven months pregnant right now (I'd have to look in the issue to be sure). So we're two or three months off, book time, not real time. It will be SOON, that's all I'll say.

5. Will we ever find out who Michonne was talking to in 21?

Of course.

6. Why do the characters seem to be ignoring the mass zombie problem? They already have a good system to kill them- if they just killed ten a day or something they would be okay.

It's been discussed in the book, cleaning off the fence and such. It'll be easier now that they have the suits. They've been busy. Give them time.

7. Why is Patricia getting it so easy? Rick has punished all the other wrongdoers severely. Is it because she's a girl?

It's more because there isn't really a point. What could you possibly do to punish these people?

Okay, I'm done now. Thanks for putting out a great comic every month (I give you credit for trying) and keeping me going back to the comic shop for more. Long after the aliens hit the scene, I'll be kissing your ass in letters like this.

Jackson Buckley

Man, it's going to be totally cool when there're aliens in this book. I've been doing all kinds of research.

Dear Robert Kirkman and amazing others involved in this comic,

All I can say after reading these past issues 21, 23 and 24 is WOW and SEXY!! I think that they have been the best comics I have ever read. I do have a few questions so here they are:

1. How many times have Glenn and Maggie well, done it in the past 10 issues? (joking but you can answer)

Hell, I can't keep track. I hope they're being CAREFUL.

2. What is this whole thing with Michonne and Tyreese. They knew each other before? Are their names rhyming on purpose?

Their names don't rhyme. Michonne is pronounced "ME-SHAWN" and Tyreese is pronounced "TY-REESE." They didn't know each other before. Michonne knew who he WAS, but didn't know him.

3. Is Lori gonna have that goddamn baby yet?

Soon.

4. Who's baby is it? Can it be a zombie baby?

I guess it COULD be. You'll just have to read the book.

5. When will there be another new character coming in?

Next issue. A few of them.

Those are my questions. Now for my compliments. This comic is so fricking amazing. I just can never and never want to put them down. They were the first comic books I've ever read and wow, the best ever. I am a die-hard zombie fan and it's another thing to add to my collection.

Thanks!!!

P.S. Please print this!!! It's my first time ever writing!!

Sign your name next time!

Dear Robert

RE: Issue #23

Jesus Fuck. Even by TWD standards, that shook things up. Rarely does a comic leave you feeling slightly out of breath, but the pace of this one left me exhausted.

Not as knackered as Rick, though. He's not a well guy.

Can't wait for the next one. Fortnight, you say? Great.

Every other bugger is plugging their favorite comics shop, so here's a mention for Gosh! in London, where this week one of the staff, when asked what was out, kept plugging 'a great issue of The Walking Dead'.

He wasn't wrong.

Regards,
Mark Clapham

Tell everyone at GOSH! I said thanks.

Hi, Kirkman, just wanted to vent a little.

After the angry words come out I'll stop hating everyone and think of puppies and kitties again.

1. Jake Reedy, what the hell do you mean that the ZOMBIES in 28 Days Later weren't zombies? Webster says that a zombie, in addition to the couple of definitions Chris Pitt wrote in issue 23, is "one who looks or behaves like an automaton." For the record, it's also "a tall drink made of various rums, liqueur, and fruit juice." If you want to know how to make one, pick up the latest release of Night of the Living Dead on DVD, the one with the original black and white version (preferred) AND the relatively decent color version. It has a commentary track by Mike Nelson (from Mystery Science Theater 3000), which is hilarious. Anyway, that first definition clearly proves that the infected in 28

Days are zombies, unless you don't know what an automaton is. Look that up yourself. 28 Days was a very

innovative ZOMBIE movie, and it kicked ass for bringing new ideas to the table. It's people like you that probably think Dead Alive sucks, too. God, you make me need a cigarette, and I just quit smoking. That's better. Sweet, sweet cancer death... Anyway, yeah, Webster also said "Whatchoo talkin' bout, Willis?" I'd listen to him, if I were you.

I think he just meant they weren't traditional Romero zombies.

2. Don't you be ripping on the cover of issue 22, Clyde in NJ. So it gave something away. So what? After almost 2 years of awesome and often misleading covers, you're gonna give the Kirk-man shit for using one that wasn't misleading at all? He writes it! He can do whatever he wants with it. If he wants the next 20 issues to be about all the survivors drinking tea and discussing politics while simultaneously ramming hot steel pokers up each others' asses, it's his right. I mean, it would probably stop selling real quick (or not, Carol's got a sweet ass), but he can if he wants.

No shit. I'm damned if I do, damned if I don't. By the way, How did you see me plots for the next 20 issues?

3. Now that Carol and Tyreese probably aren't together anymore, can I marry her?

If you find a machine that can transform your matter into my imagination and Charlie's ink lines, maybe... but seriously... it wouldn't be worth it. There are ZOMBIES in this comic.

4. Forget what I said a few issues ago about killing Rick and putting Tyreese in charge. Upon closer examination, I have decided that they are both too insane to lead, and Hershel should be in charge. The guy has done nothing but eat shit sandwiches for the entire series, why not do something good for him?

I think I've heard this about ALL the characters at least once. Sorry, I hate each and every one of these made-up people.

5. Okay, Carol is still alive, apparently, so this question doesn't really matter, but while she was lying there, supposedly bleeding to death, it looked like everyone just took off and left Sophia alone with her, unsupervised and unarmed. DID NO ONE ELSE NOTICE THIS?! DID THE SURVIVORS NOT THINK ABOUT THE STUPIDITY OF THAT FOR EVEN A SECOND?! I mean, what if Carol HAD died, and came back as a zombie, and attacked Sophia? While it would have been sick and twisted as all hell (I'm almost surprised you DIDN'T do it, what with you're obvious hatred for little kids and all), and interesting to read ("Oh, mommy, you're okay after all! Yay! Why don't you say anything? Why are you ripping my vital organs from my torso? Why are you..."Chomp, chomp..."), why would Lori of all people let that happen? But Carol didn't die.

Thank god for

that, huh? Actually, I think one of the five-thousand characters in this book was keeping an eye on Sophia. Maybe Hershel's son, Billy. He never really does much.

6. About berating Jake and Clyde earlier, sorry about that guys. Just had to get that out. I don't hate you or anything. You read this book, which means you're both bad-ass. I'm sorry I said those things, baby, it's just... I get so lonely sometimes, and scared, y'know? Come on back to Ike, baby. I promise I'll be better this time. Let's sing Proud Mary, like in the old days...

Okay, that's all. Keep up the good work, ye gods of zombieness.

Kicking ass for the lord,
Dan Haskell,

You had so much more conviction before you wussed out and apologized for no damn reason. I'm ashamed.

Rick has got to be getting sicker from his chest wound in issue one! Tyreese knocking him around probably isn't helping much! I am all for the police copter from Dawn of the Dead landing at the prison! Have you seen Undead? More like Unwatchable! Now I understand the whole bit about the alien landing jokes in the letters page because of Undead!

Actually, I think those started before I saw Undead. Also, they're certainly not a way of making fun of that movie. I LOVED that movie. It's got some really cool stuff in it.

Land of the Dead dvd is cool, especially with the extra about Shaun of the Dead meeting George Romero. Why don't you cameo in a zombie movie?

I applied but they never called me back. I think it's my prison time.

When is the script book coming out? I appreciate everyone's work on catching the comic up to schedule---when the hell do you have time to sleep? Loved Invincible/Spider-Man in Team-Up! I cannot wait for the rest of the story in Invincible! Will Rick cameo in your Marvel zombie book? Love your work and thanks again for the good reading material!!!!

Bobby W. Chamberlain

The script book is in stores now. Rick will not be appearing in Marvel Zombies. Thanks for the kind words, Bobby.

Robert,
I am looking forward to seeing you at San Diego Comic Con next year. :) Just read issue 23 of WD and thought it was the best one yet!!! A couple comments/questions:

1. Any thoughts on Showtime's Masters Of Horror?

I'll be buying the DVD. I don't have Showtime.

2. Any thoughts on the new Horror Channel (which I believe was supposed to launch on October 31st

and air UNCUT films but was delayed for "technical reasons.")

If I got it, I'd watch it like the dickens.

3. I am EXTREMELY excited about Tony Moore drawing Vertigo's The Exterminators.

Peace.
Andrew Rootz Chesterfield Missouri

Me too! I can't wait to read that book.

Letter Hacks,

So I was reading the Walking Dead thread on Comic Book Resources a little bit ago, and a user was commenting on how he thinks the book has been neglecting the zombie aspect of this zombie book for the last several issues. Then something dawned on me.

The zombies have become sort of a non-issue in the comic as of late. Yeah, the story's always been about the people who survived the zombie apocalypse and not the zombies, but the zombies were always there. Until the people moved into the prison, at which point Rick and company pretty much stopped thinking about the zombies because they were all trapped on the outside of the fence. And that's why the book hasn't had much zombie action. We as readers are starting to become a little too comfortable with a horde of zombies outside of a chain link fence because the characters are doing just the same. The absence of the zombie problem from the book is symbolic of the absence of the zombie problem from the minds of the characters. A bonafide literary device in a comic book? Tell me it isn't true!

And of course, we all know what happens when the survivors of a zombie apocalypse start to ignore the problem...

Holy smokes! You'd think I'd planned all this from the beginning. (wink)

Issue #23 was great as usual, but I do have a suggestion that would help me (and I'm sure some other readers) out a bit when digging into a new issue. The story always transitions pretty seamlessly from one issue to the next. I remember when I was reading the first trade I had no clue where one issue started and the next ended. No definitive end to the action in the previous issue means it takes me a bit to remember exactly where the last issue left off, especially when it was six weeks ago or more. Maybe you could put a "Previously In..." page at the beginning of each issue, as a replacement for the character guide at the end of each issue (which really doesn't need to be every issue anyway). Even just a smaller version of the last page of the previous issue, along with a few mugshots of the characters that'll be showing up in the issue would be great. You don't need to go into a long explanation of everything that's happened in the series like Marvel always feels the need to do, but a short recap would be appreciated. I'm sure new readers would appreciate that as well, instead of just starting with a page of Tyreese punching Rick in the face for some reason.

Hm. I think I'll start doing that with this issue. Good idea.

BTW, the Invincible/Spider-Man MTU was one of my favorite comics of the year. Doesn't seem worth writing to the Invincible or MTU letters page just to tell you that, but it had me rolling with laughter all the way through. Great job, man.

Aaron Stege

That's cool. It appears this letters column is the place to talk about that book anyway. Hey, if Brian can talk about Avengers in Powers I can talk about Team-Up here. Although, we all know he does that because he doesn't have enough mail to fill up that letters column. The hack.

Dear TWD,
Great issue. However, I found myself more intrigued by the side stories (Allen dying and Carol living) than the whole fight and subsequent fainting. It will be very interesting now to see where Rick and Tyreese's relationship goes from here.

The overall story looks very much like the story of Rick Grimes and his slow, but eventual, "turn to the dark side". I hope it is. But then again I'm even more excited by the cover of #25! In most zombie-apocalypse stories the remnants of government seem to be worse than the plague itself. I'm hoping for something different (like what I keep hinting at, the "turn" of Rick, though I will not be surprised if the "military" takes over the prison, and at first seem "evil") and that this might take us into a larger epic struggle of survival for all of mankind. It will be interesting, again, to see how Rick interprets his responsibility to the group when others arrive who are equally capable, if not more so, of protecting them.

One constructive criticism, I'm not all for the big list of characters at the end of the book. You're selling bi-annual TPBs (plus the upcoming hard-cover) so any reader can catch up on all that information much easier than comic-fans could in the past. It was great the first time I saw it, but with each issue I'm liking it less and less.

I would rather see that space dedicated to either Team TWD (specifically regarding TWD) or fan-art, upcoming script previews for TWD, previews of other work by Robert and Team TWD, or a detailed background of an individual character. This is just some random items flung against the wall.

Sincerely,
Merl Key

Thanks for the kind words, Merl. I'll think of something on the character bios. For now, though... they're no in this issue.

Kirkman,

I just read issue 23, and I think it may be your best yet! Not a zombie in sight, but still lots of great action! The fight between Rick and Ty was great. The cover set it up very well, and the first page was a great way to start. It'll be interesting to see

how the rest of the group reacts to the info that came out during the fight (i.e. Ty killing Chris and Rick killing Dex). This one fight might open the door to many more. Glenn and Maggie running around naked during the fight was pretty amusing too...

Carol surviving her attempted suicide should be very interesting. How will she explain it to everyone else? Will they try to help her or look down on her for trying to take the "easy" way out (while potentially endangering everyone else in the prison when she turned if no one knew she was dead). ? Will they take it out on the new girl, Michonne? All interesting possibilities that I can't wait to see unfold!

I'm surprised to see Allen die so soon. I thought you'd drag this out a little longer so we'd get to see his reaction to Rick trying to save him. I also expected him to live so the group would learn that zombie bites don't kill if treated properly... Apparently, that's not the case though.

I don't know... Allen did lose a lot of blood...

I'm not quite sure what happened with Rick on the last page. Did he just collapse after the beating he took? Did it have anything to do with him shooting Allen? I guess we'll find out next issue...

He collapsed after the fight. The smoking gun is a little misleading.

Glad to hear there's going to be a poster soon. Any word on what that poster will be? Is it going to be one of the covers or something brand new? Or are you going to keep us in suspense by refusing to tell us?

Don't I always choose suspense?

Really looking forward to the next issue. I hope the fact that the aliens are now involved doesn't detract from the book... I really don't know why you revealed Michonne's alien ties in the letters page though. That just seems like bad writing to me...

Have I ever been accused of anything less?

Thanks for all your hard work!

Jim Amato

PS - When are we going to get to see the zombies play volleyball?

Next issue.

Kirkman and Co,

Just wanted to tell everyone involved that you are doing a great job! I have never been this excited about a series... well... EVER. Every month (or more-that was a jab at you Kirkman-) I head to my local comic shop (Chris's Comics in Marshfield, MA) and run home to get my latest surprise-filled

issue.

I just finished issue #21 and I just have to comment on the Letter Hacks talk of staying at the prison or roaming aimlessly. I do think you could spend a lot of time at the prison there is just sooo much you can do with it. I could see the group finally leaving after an extreme event takes place (but at the rate bodies are dropping that would be hard to pull off). Ok now that I am done sucking your balls, I have a few questions: Will we ever see and zombie animals? RE has zombie dogs but I am thinking about zombie gorillas, elephants, or even lamas.

I've said no zombie animals before... but I hadn't thought about zombie Gorillas yet...

That would just be strange scene if the group came across a Zoo in there travels. Is there an address I could mail an issue and have you sign to me?

Sorry, I just don't have the time to do this. I wish I could.

I don't know if you have been asked this yet so bare with me. I would be willing to pay a fee or whatever but it would just be a great thing to have. Please, for the love of the undead give me an address! Also, please do NOT write the address of an asylum under this question.

Anyways, keep up the great work everyone. Well, until the undead tear through my face like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper - make mine Kirkman!

-Andy Cooper

Like a crackhead through a syringe wrapper? Sheesh!

Firstly, this will be my 1st comic write-in so get happy. punisher, ghost rider, cyberforce, team 7/ wetworks didn't warrant it, however, your comic has enough motivation for me now...that and a long ass doldrum on and otherwise slow Sunday night. So, long story short, the work you have put out is exceptional, well thought out, and most of all, inspired. SOME POINTS OF ORDER

1. Ever since I was 11 there have been a series of nightmares where zombies and similar imagery perpetuates. This is largely due to an episode one halloween where I watched "night of the living dead" alone, hopped up on sugar, in an old/creaky house with a lot of people wandering the streets at night, etc. etc. Now, at 29, they still persist however due to the advent of a certain psychedelic encounter, otherwise known as freshman year, I can now dream lucidly. Sometimes I get away, sometimes I get nipped, and so forth. Well, I took some initiative during psych and to be brief, they are a metaphor for anxiety concerning time (thanks dr. torrello). Zombies never tire, always pursue, and yada yada yada. This makes for good writing but restless sleep.

2. You've made a very believable microcosm. All zombie films work on this premise, but yours seems feasible. Wanna' say gothic-horror "Moby Dick", but it's more contemporary and believable.

More contemporary than "Moby Dick?" The hell you say!

The problems therein aren't so cliché. The characters react on a very un-comicbook manner, more adult and complex, so again, well done. Rick in particular is an excellent study. He's the glue, but very few of his "crew" seem to appreciate that he's saved their lives many times over. But they crucify him when something goes wrong. #23 Tyresse is way out of line to be blunt. I would've thought he'd be more unhinged after his daughter and all that though. Glenn/Maggie seem very believable however.

Thanks.

3. The story's sine wave of action/dialogue has pissed off some readers, but it can't be all combat all the time.

I agree.

4. WTF is up with Diamond? I can't get #21 for the life of me and they are unreliable at best. Thoughts?

Well, the issues sell out pretty quickly after they come out. I'd recommend preordering them at your local comic shop.

5. will the origin of the zombie blight be exposed?

No plans.

6. A lot of people talking about a TV series. Such a good idea in terms of budget/acting. a horror-esque Lost? You going to jump on that or what?

Pretty much out of my hands. I'd certainly love for there to be one.

7. Your realism is incredible. ex) frozen zombies in the sub development. Very imaginative. The scene where the snow falls off the gate to reveal the sign was a masterpiece of suspension as well. classy...

Thanks.

8. lastly (pressed for time and must go), are they going to make probing raids out of the prison to find more survivors, kill zombies?

Maybe. I don't want to give things away.

Many many thanks and much respect,
Jeff Thompson ("taking it slow" and all that)

Thanks for the letter, Jeff.

Mr. Kirkman,
Thanks for the great comic. After reading the letters section in issue #22 with all of the zombie related questions an unasked question came to my somewhat warped mind: Do the undead who eat the living move their bowels?

Inquiring minds want to know.
Marc Cawiezel

That is currently unknown. It has to go

SOMEWHERE

though... but I would guess their bodies aren't working well enough for any kind of digestion to occur. Just for the sake of whatever... I'm just going to assume their bodies are so toxic they dissolve whatever they eat. Another thing is that most zombies really aren't getting to eat that much in their lifespan. A chunk here, a chunk there.

It's not like they're constantly eating after the initial craziness.

Hey,
Walking Dead has officially become Loitering Snooze. Dance with who brought you... zombies...remember? Soap operatic tripe may have its place, but hardly in a medium with the visual potential of comics. So much promise squandered so abruptly.
Blecch!

-Joe

There will be plenty of action and gore to keep the manly men happy. Stick with it. If you'll excuse me, now... I've got a bear to kill.

I think this is the time when people stop talking about how great this awesome new comic book is and start wondering when it'll jump the shark. (Or have they already? I usually only gloss over the vast, endless letters page each issue contains) Anyways, not yet. At least in my book.

I'm sure a couple of people have complained about the lack of zombies in the past couple of issues. That doesn't bug me much. Walking Dead always seemed more focused on the characters and how they changed and adapted and grew in a world infested by undead cannibals. The long stretch in the prison illustrates this with more conviction than the rest of the title's lifespan so far.

The stint in the prison is a good example of the "let's hole ourselves up while the hungry zombies fester outside" aspect of most zombie cinema. In retrospect, I'm surprised "abandoned prison" wasn't used before "shopping mall", "military base", "fortified city", or "police station" were. It seems so obvious now, which is a trademark of good writing.

I'm glad this seems to be the end of that and the beginning of something new though. The prison train took you about as far as it could go and it's cool that some federals will be making their way to the book. I knew you were going to do that the second Rick began his big speech about how nobody was coming. Of course, the "big speech" is an old horror movie cliché, but your execution of it made it seem more like an homage than a retread back to the well.

The art is still solid. Sometimes the characters are hard to distinguish from each other, which was never the case when Tony Moore was on the job. Still, Adlard and Rathburn are growing as artists. I really like their experimentation with graywash in this issue. The tones have never looked better.

Anyways, great work. This is your most fervently

loved
comic book series for a reason.

Sputnik Jones

Thanks for the kind words, Sputnik.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I really enjoy your working on The Walking Dead, Marvel Team-Up, Marvel Knights 2099 and your arc

on Captain America. I love how you, like Romero, focus on more of the human side of the zombie stories than just the blood and gore that comes from killing zombies. With that said here are a few questions:

1: We all got to read the Invincible issue of Marvel Team-Up. Which leads me to this: So when is Rick going to show up in Marvel Team-Up and kill zombie with Spider-Man?

Issue 27, most likely.

2: All joking aside now, after reading the "Crossover" arc in Ultimate FF by Mark Millar and Greg Land, I saw that you are writing "Marvel Zombies" and Sean Phillips is doing the art. I am now highly anticipating this mini-series knowing your approach on zombies and knowing that Sean Phillips will deliver with his art. How much did you enjoy doing the mini and are you jealous that Millar came up with the idea first?

I had a blast working on the book. Sean Phillips is a great artist and Arthur Suydam's covers are reason enough to be the book.

3: What's your favorite zombie flick? Mine is the extended cut of Romero's Dawn of the Dead.

I still haven't watched that... I've still got that DVD sitting on my shelf.

And finally:

4: Have you seen Peter Jackson's "Dead Alive"? If not, you must get your hands on it now. The movie is the goriest I've ever seen and it's so over the top, it make me laugh so hard and just say, "That isn't right."

My dad made Tony Moore and I watch Dead Alive when we were in 8th grade. It changed our lives.

Keep up the good work and I can't wait to read where you take us with the new direction with issue 25.

Dale Varley

You and me both, Dale!

It was recently brought to my attention that I might not be making you smooth cats as away of my other books as possible. So in an effort to do that I'll be swiping Bendis' style (yeah, again) and running a handy dandy list at the end of these letters columns. Enjoy!

ITEM! Shipping the end of MARCH we'll have INVINCIBLE The Ultimate Collection VOLUME 2. It'll be a nice thick hardcover like the first one. It has issues 14-24 along with #0 and the Free Comic Book Day story and loads of extras. It'll retail for \$34.95

ITEM! THE PACT #4 is in stores NOW and has been for a few weeks now. It's written by me, drawn by Jason Howard and features the return of a certain villain from this very book. You don't have to have read issues 1-3 to understand the issue. It's a lot of fun.

ITEM! SUPERPATRIOT: WAR ON TERROR #4 is finally coming out. Sorry for the long delay. It's been resolicited for MARCH and should be in stores toward the end of the month. It's our big finale... it's going to blow doors off--which considering how much time we spent putting the doors ON... should mean something to you.

ITEM! THE WALKING DEAD keeps going strong, if you like horror or people talking, or horrific things happening to people who talk, you'll dig it. Pick it up. Issue 26 should be out around the same time--or on the same DAY as this issue.

ITEM! BATTLE POPE is coming out regularly after a small snag with a worthless colorist. Issue 5 is on stands now and future issues should be following at a monthly rate, or the fur will fly. It's a fun series, written by me, drawn by Tony Moore & Friends and colors by aforementioned worthless colorist Val Staples. Ask for it by name.

ITEM! MARVEL TEAM-UP #19 is a kick ass story set in the Marvel Universe from 1991 featuring CABLE and WOLVERINE teaming up to fight THE MANDARIN. It features art by CORY WALKER and CLIFF RATHBURN and is going to be colored by VAL STAPLES. Ask for it by name. It's also a prelude to the big "FREEDOM RING" storyline that runs through Team-Up 20-24 featuring art by ANDY KUHN so pick it up.

ITEM! My second issue of ULTIMATE X-MEN should be out by now. Featuring art by TOM RANEY. It's a blast working on these characters and I'm hoping the fun I'm having shows. I've got a lot of cool stuff planned for my run, so check it out.

ITEM! Unless you've been living under a rock you've heard about MARVEL ZOMBIES my mini-series with SEAN PHILIPS over at Marvel. The first issue just got a second printing and issue 3 should be on the shelves when this hits so be on the lookout--it's CRAZY FUN.

I think that's all for now.

I'll see you guys back here next month, or earlier. Until then, keep it REAL.



NEXT ISSUE

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